

The Changing Landscape of Ontario Postsecondary Education

Richard Dominic Wiggers

OSCA Annual Conference

Sunday, November 9, 2025

Hilton Inn, Mississauga, Ontario



Introduction

My background

**University
Academic**
1994 – 2001



**Education
Policy**
2001 – 2008



**Education
Research**
2009 – 2016



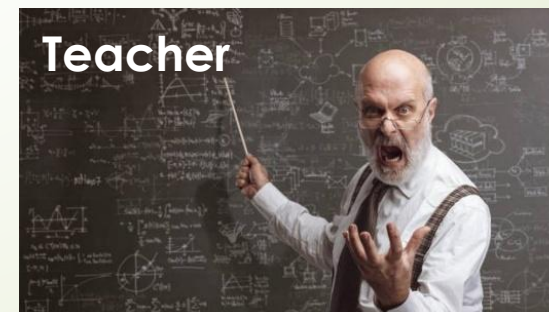
**College
Administration**
2016 – 2023



Gap Year

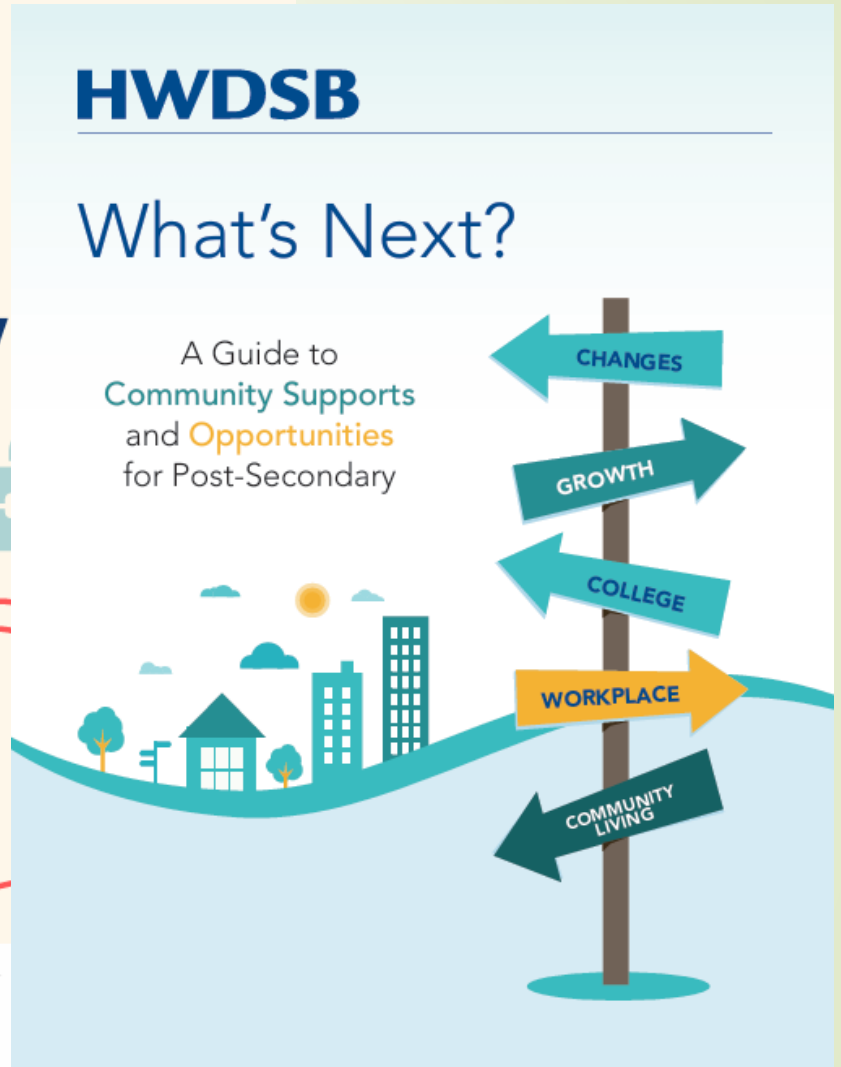
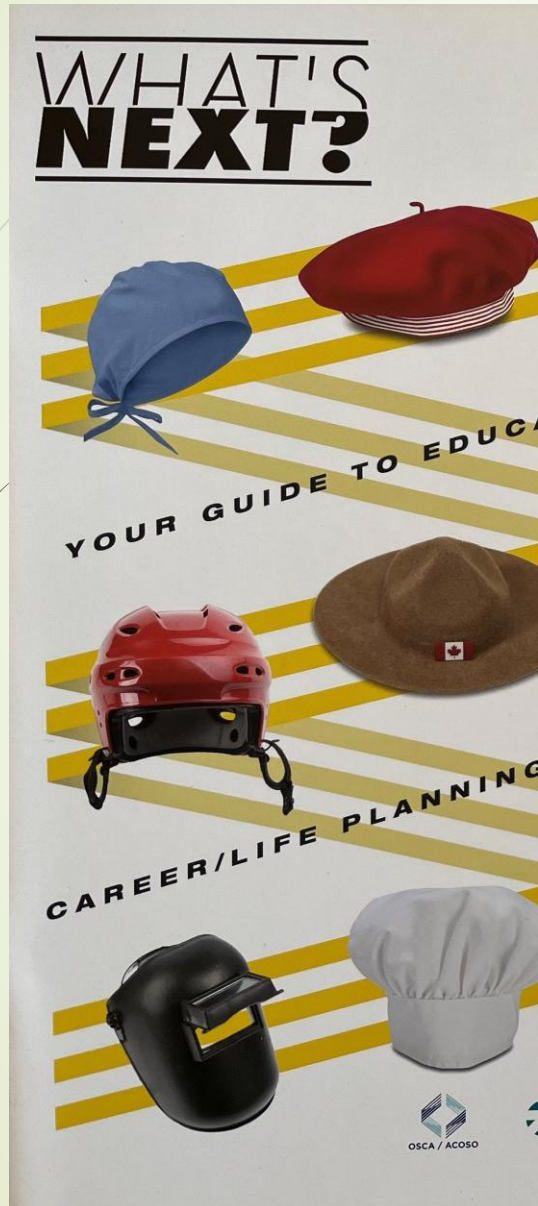


Skilled Trades

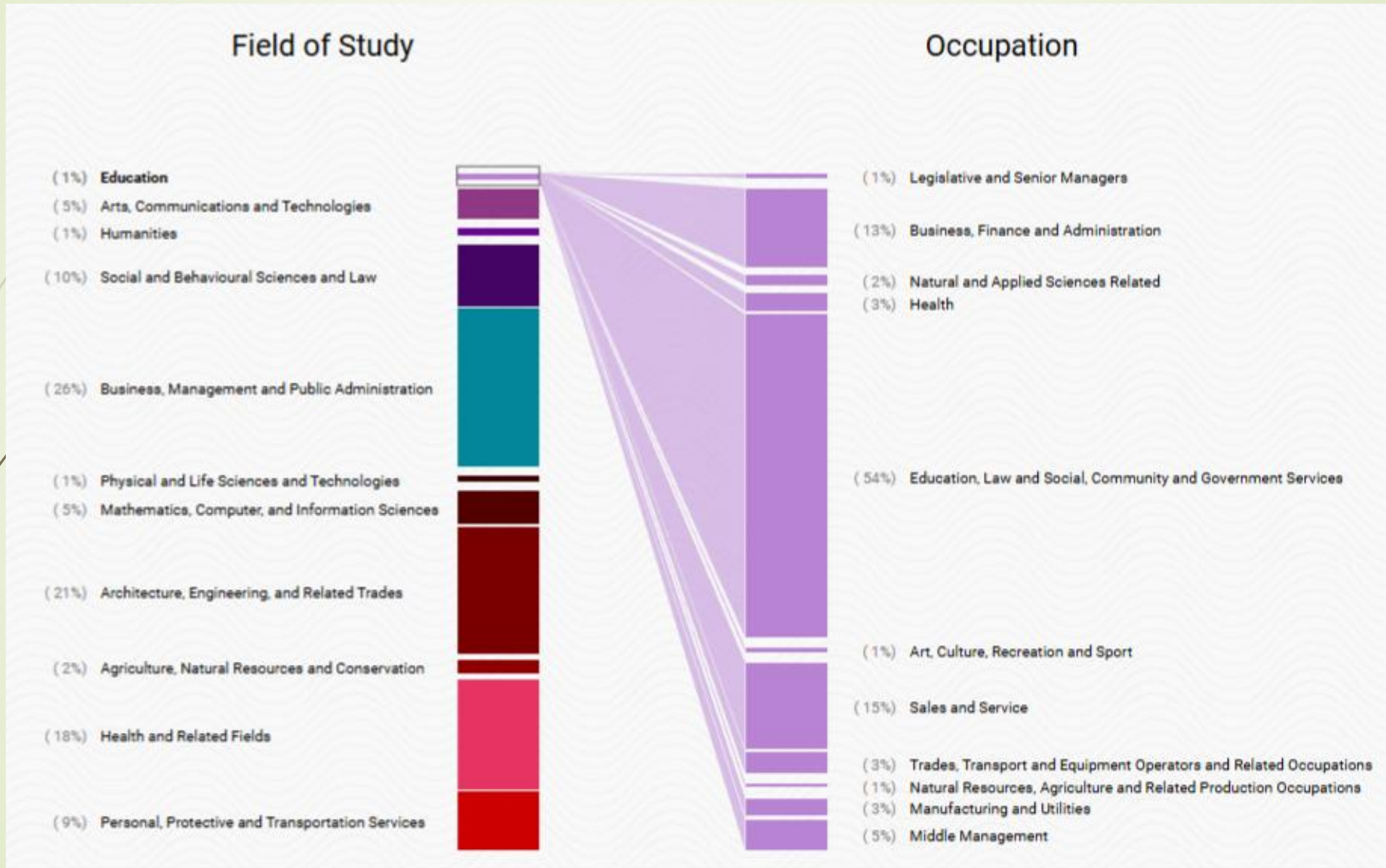


Teacher

HEQCO/OSCA/UTM: What's Next

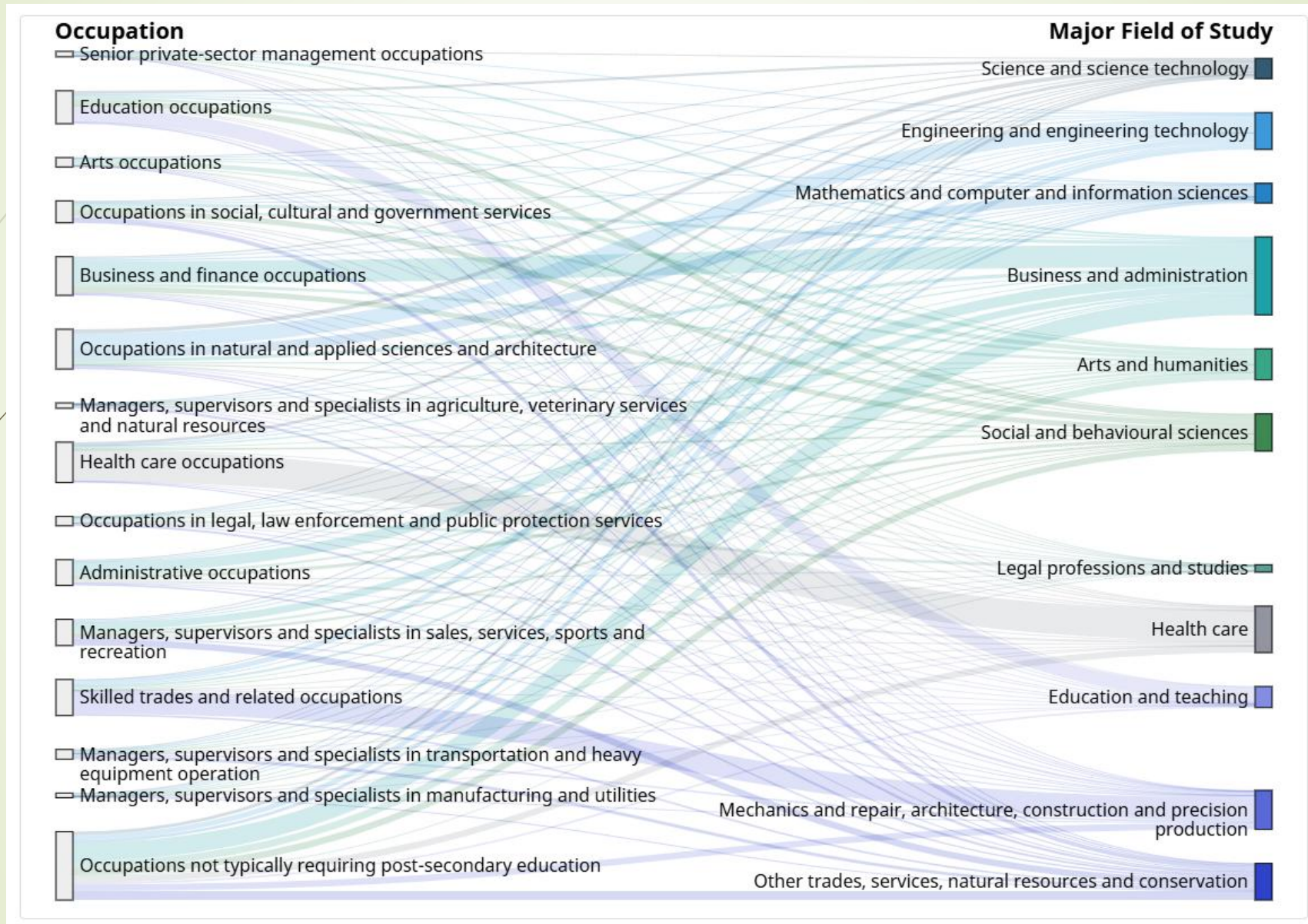


HEQCO Infographic



Source: HEQCO, <https://heqco.ca/ontarios-postsecondary-graduates-find-employment-in-a-wide-range-of-occupations/>

Statistics Canada



Source: Statistics Canada, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/dv-vd/index-eng.cfm>.

Sources of Data

The State of Postsecondary
Education in Canada

2025



Thank you to our Partners

capio duolingo english test element451
Pearson Riipen Studioity



Contents

- **1. Higher Education System**

Institutions, credentials and students

- **2. Finances**

Student costs, provincial funding, and the financial crisis

- **3. Labour Market**

Helping high school students anticipate the future



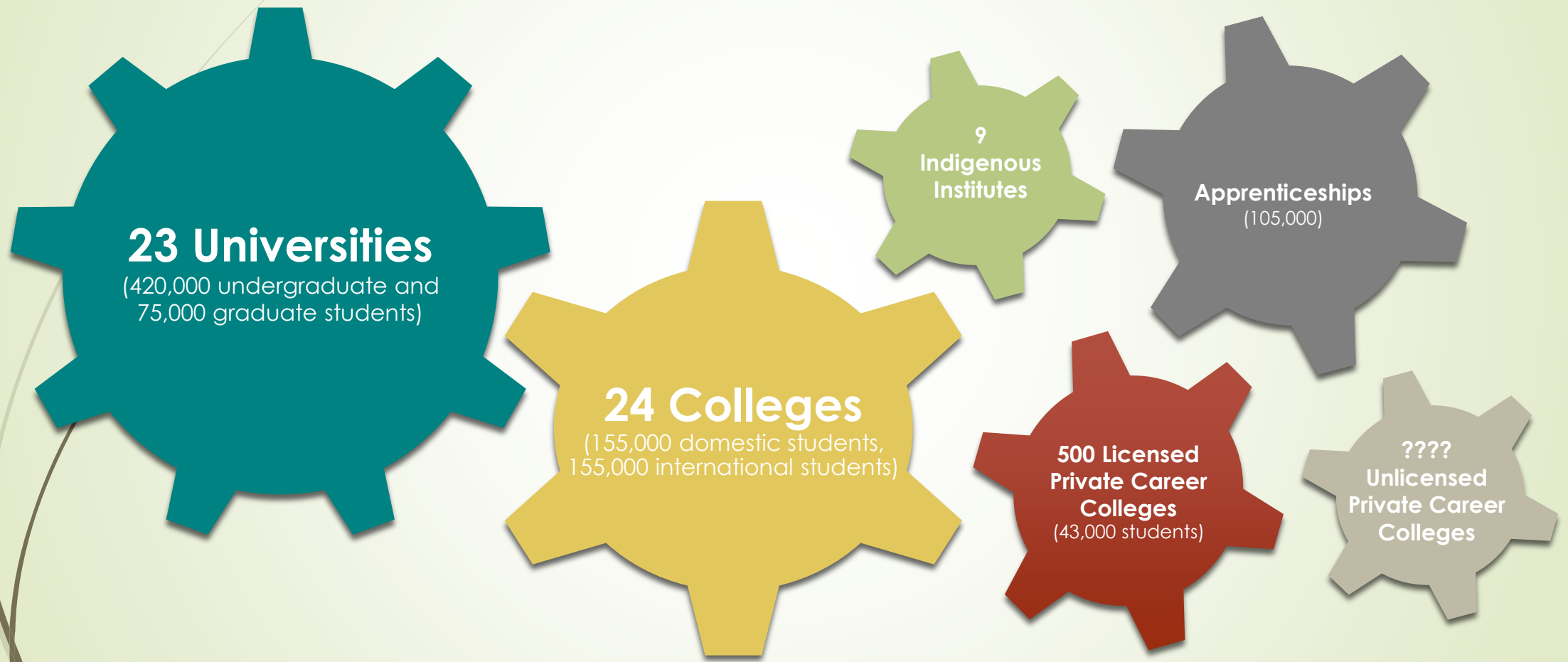
1. Credentials

Ontario's Public System



HESA, *The State of Postsecondary Education in Canada*, 2025, p. 113.

Ontario's Higher Education System



Other Universities

Name	Type	Location
Royal Military College	National	Kingston
Tyndale University	Evangelical	Toronto
Redeemer University	Christian	Hamilton
Yorkville University	For-Profit	Toronto/Vaughan
International Business University	For-Profit	Toronto
Univ. of Niagara Falls Canada	For-Profit	Niagara Falls
Niagara University	Satellite Campus	Vaughan
Northeastern University	Satellite Campus	Toronto

College vs. University?

	COLLEGES	UNIVERSITIES
CREDENTIALS	1 yr. certificate/2 yr. diploma	4 yr./graduate/professional degrees
MISSION	Respond to local labour market	Knowledge, well rounded citizens
FOCUS	Practical/Experiential	Theory/Research
COST	Lower tuition/shorter programs/ local commuter students	Higher tuition/residences
CLASSROOM	Smaller classes/real world instructors	Large lecture courses/professors
	Graduate certificates, degrees, Masters degrees	More focus on experiential learning
	Hiring more faculty/administrators with PhDs, some aspire to be university	Shared campuses, joint or articulated credentials

Examples of College-University Cooperation

UNIVERSITY OF
GUELPH-HUMBER

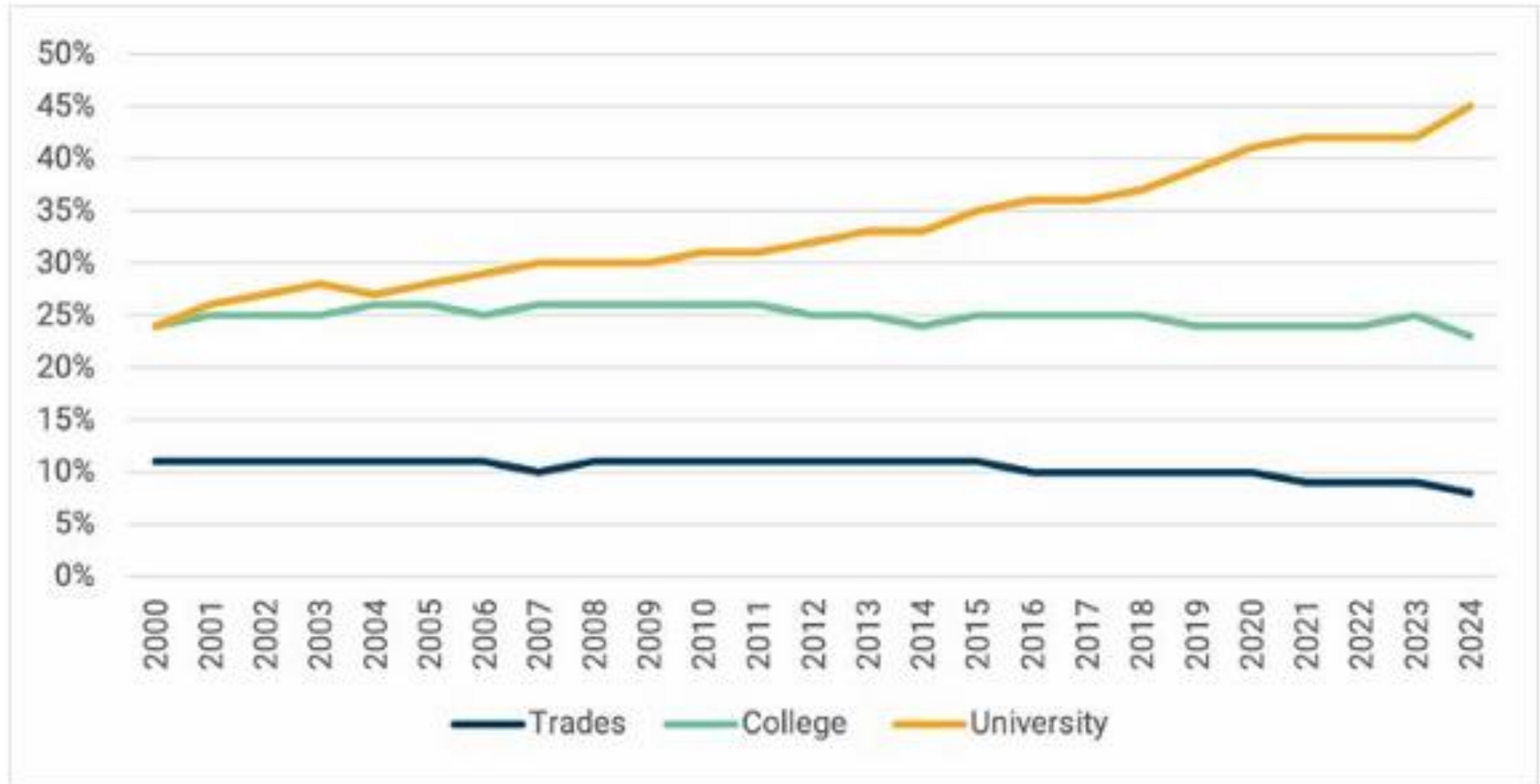
Seneca@York Campus

Canadore College/Nipissing University

Durham College/Ontario Technical University

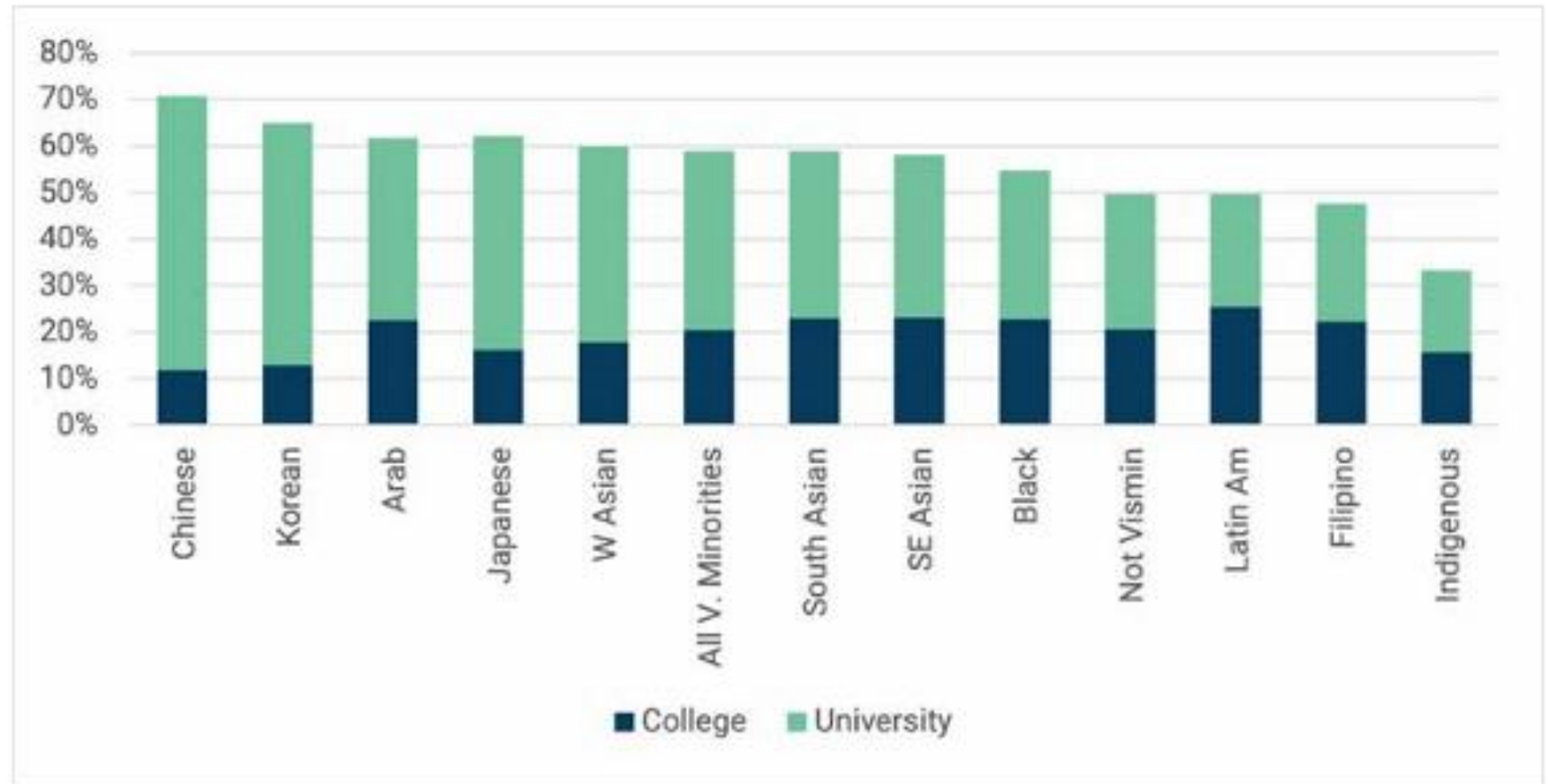
University is Preferred

Figure 6.3: Educational Attainment Rates of Canadians Aged 25-34, 2000 to 2024



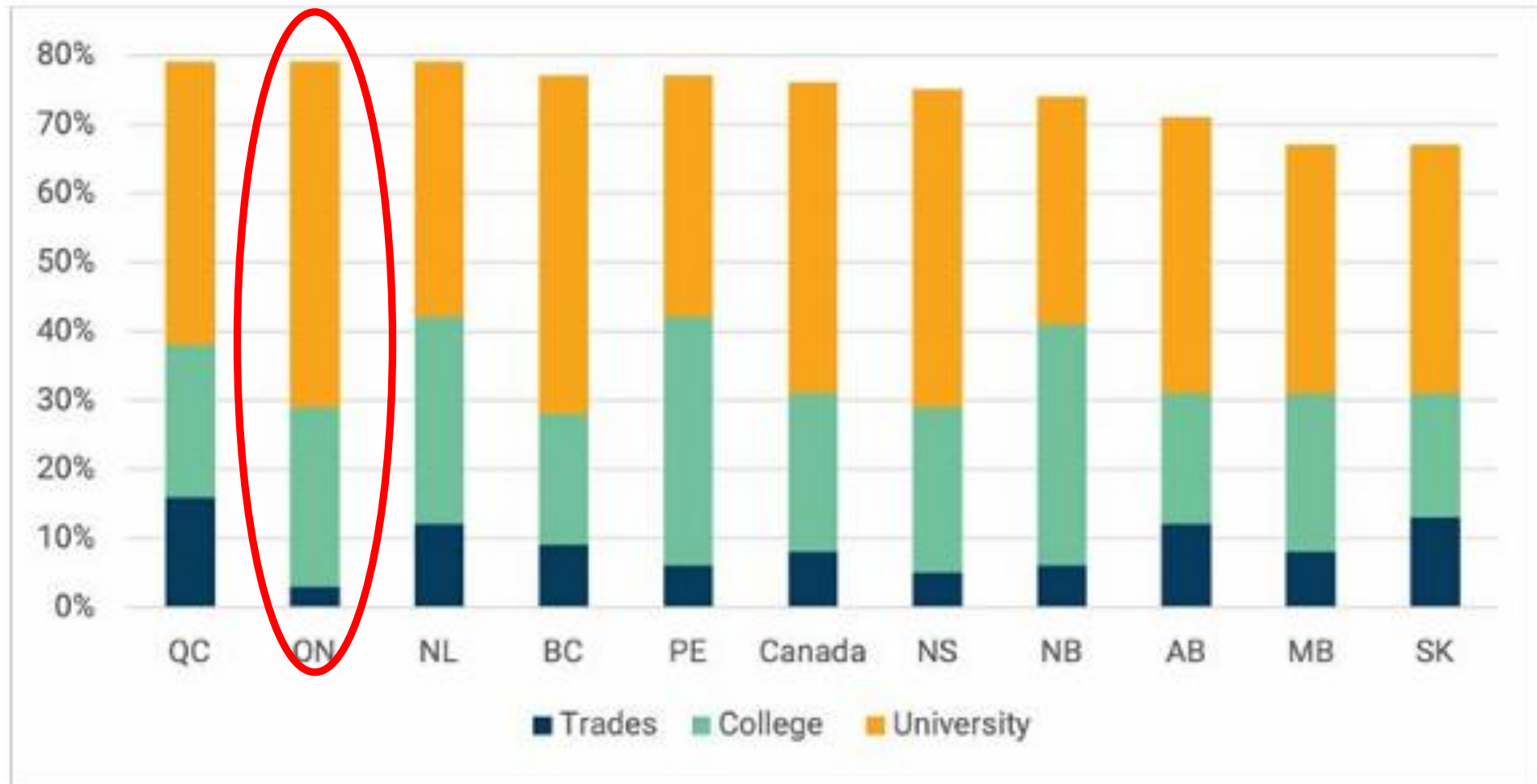
Immigrants especially favour University

Figure 1.9: Canada participation rates of 15–24-year-old high school graduates by Ethnicity and Sector, 2021

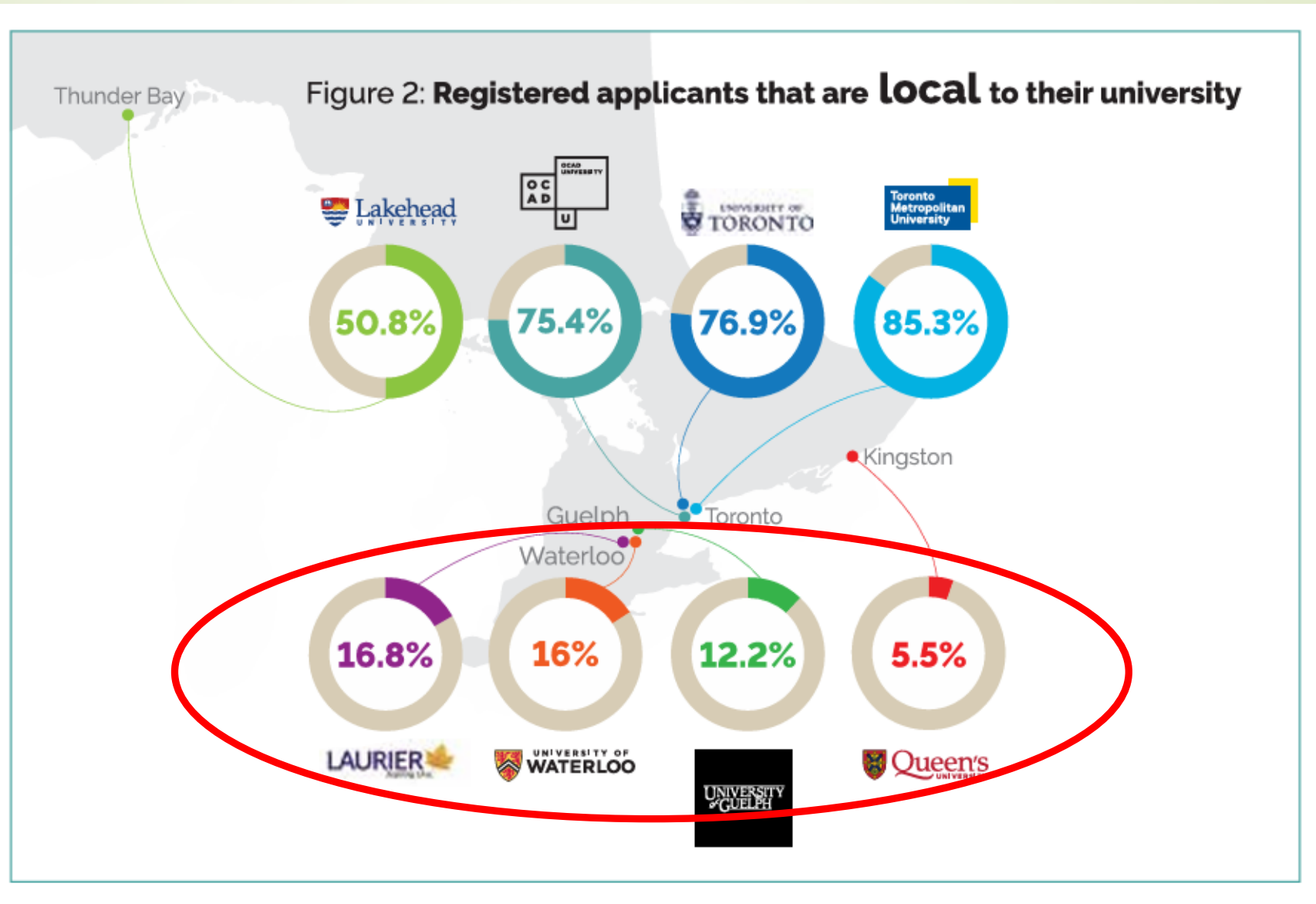


Postsecondary Attainment

Figure 6.4: Educational Attainment Rates of Persons Aged 25-34, by Province, 2024

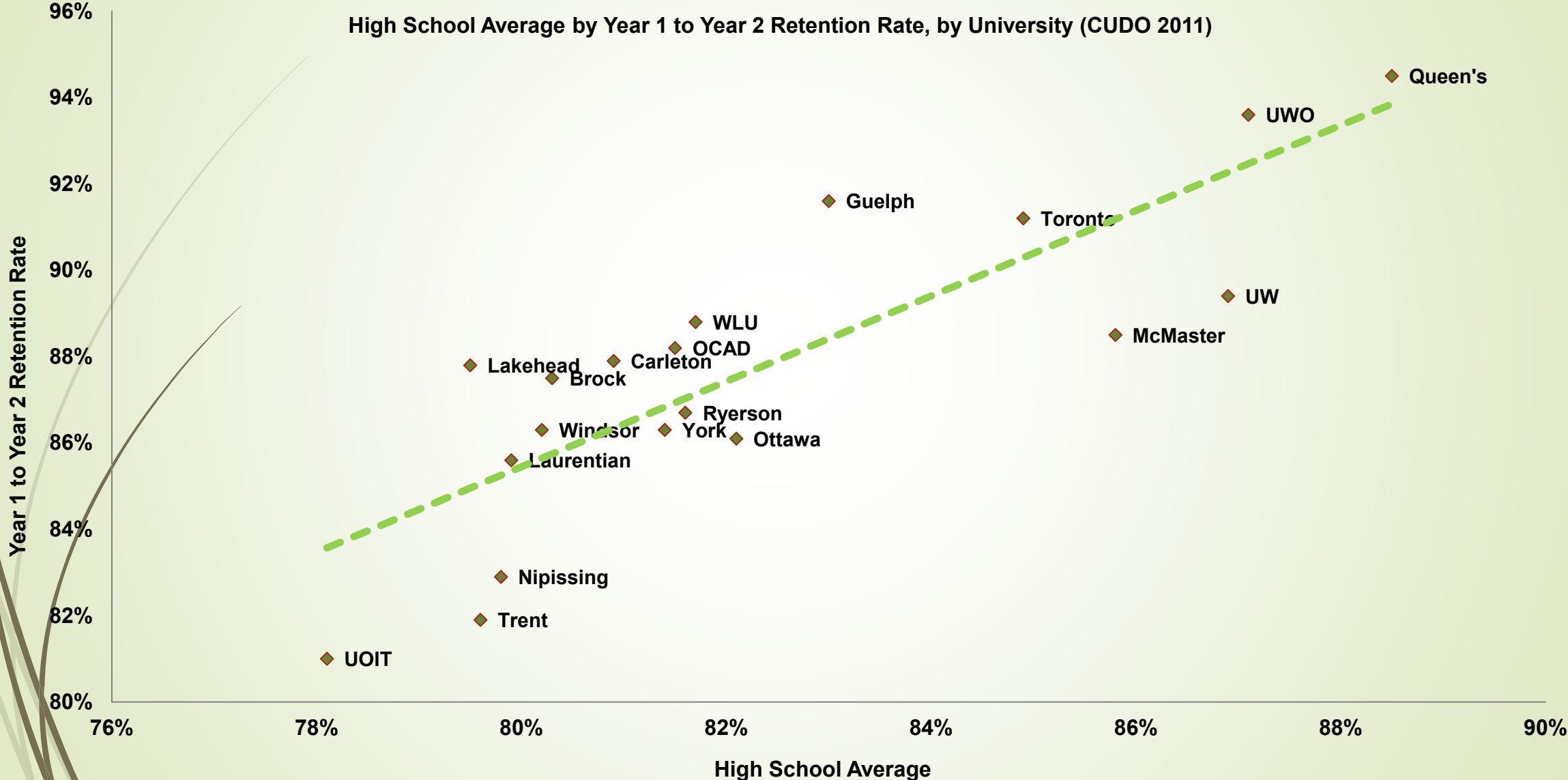


Recruiting Locally



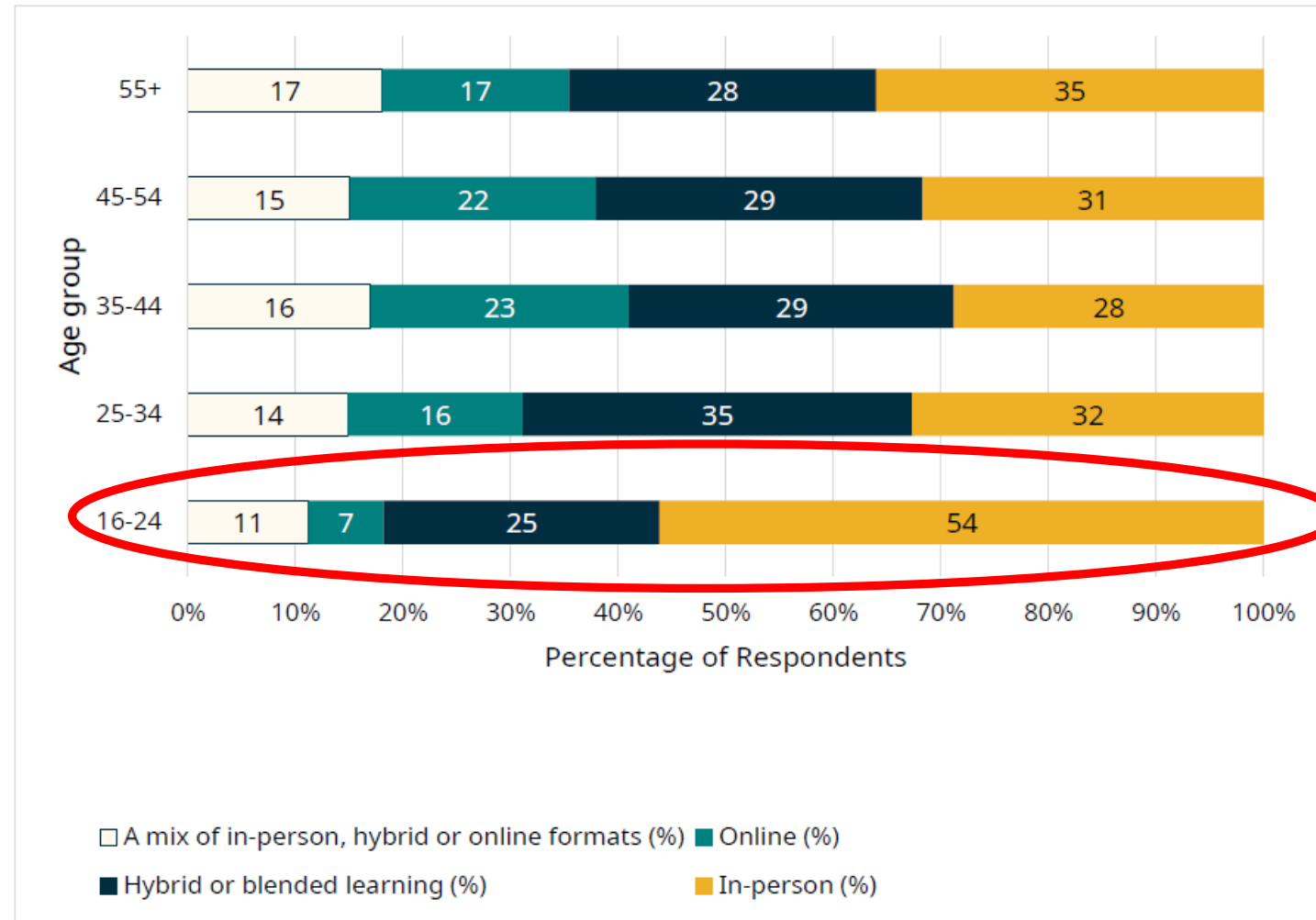
High School grades

High School Average by Year 1 to Year 2 Retention Rate, by University (CUDO 2011)



Online Learning

Preferred Learning Formats Moving Forward, by Age



Note: This figure shows responses by age to the question, "What is your preferred format for learning going forward?" with available options being a mix of in-person, hybrid or online formats; hybrid or blended learning; online; and in-person.



2. Finances

Student contributions have declined

Figure ON7: University Undergraduate Tuition and Additional Fees, Canada vs. Ontario, 2006-07 to 2024-25, in \$2024

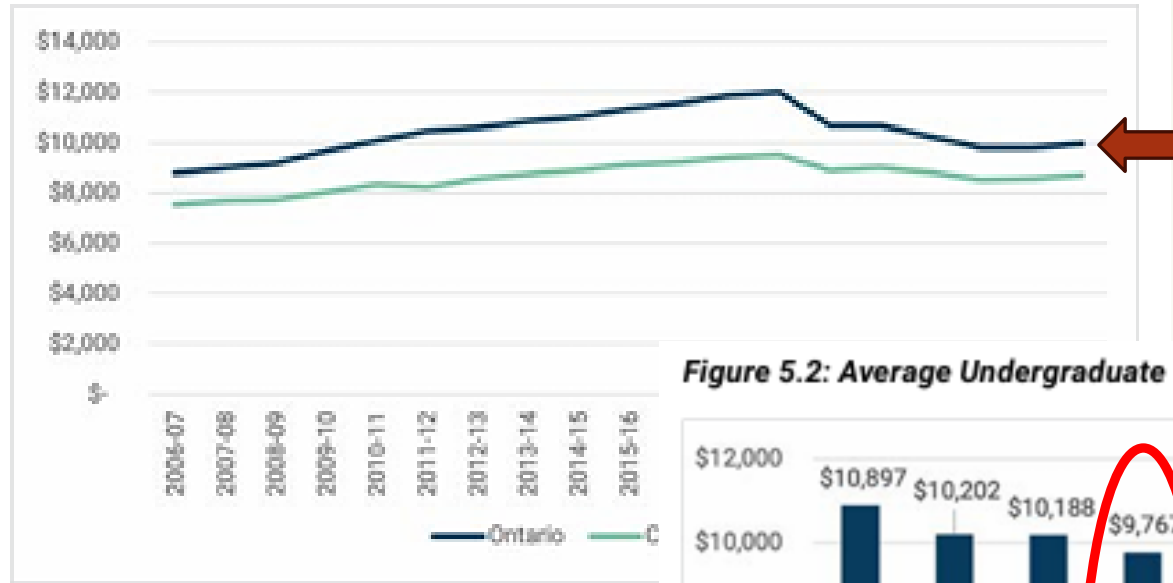


Figure 5.2: Average Undergraduate Tuition and Mandatory Fees, by Province, 2024-25

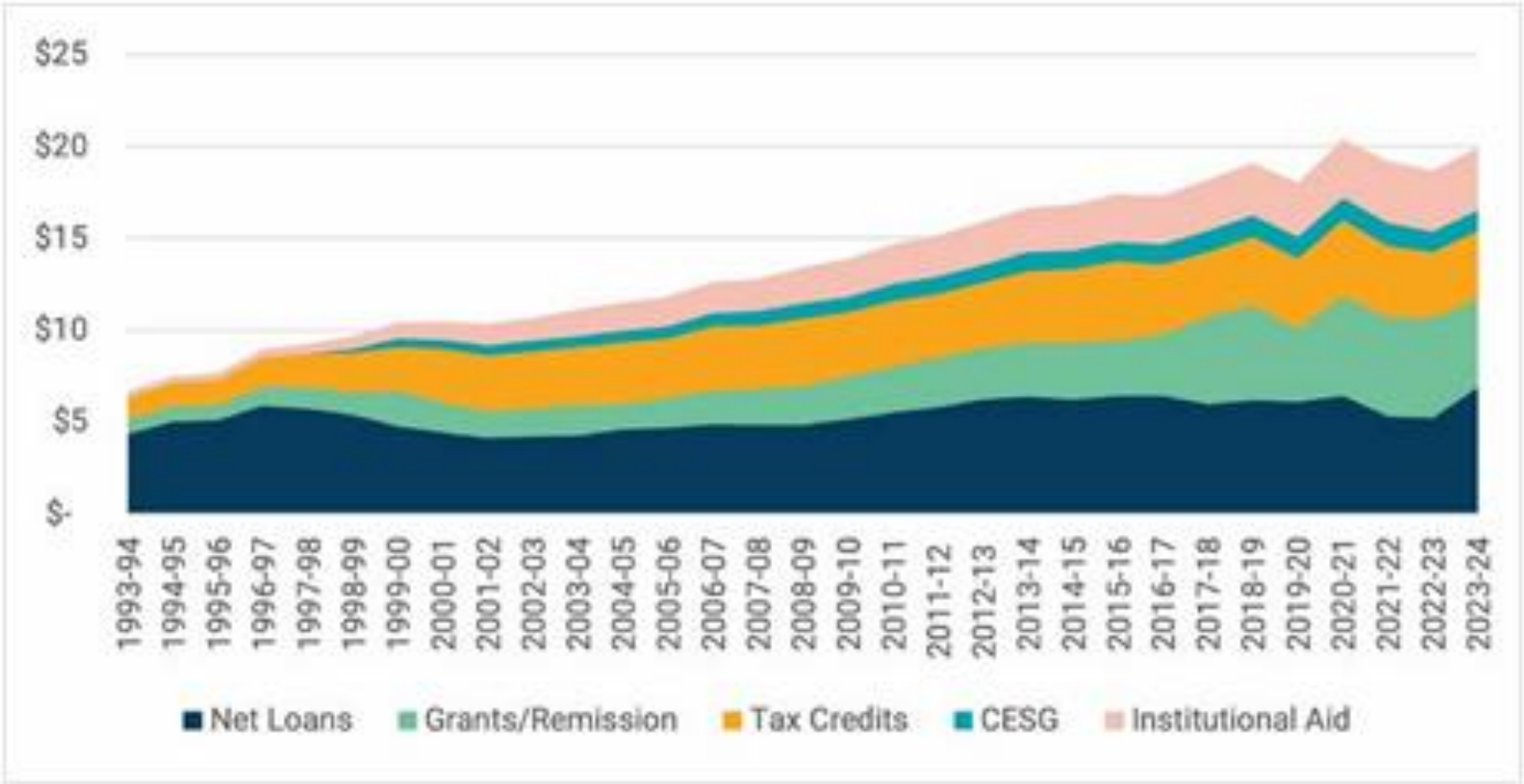


Fewer loans, more grants/bursaries

- Federal government provides nearly 2/3 of funding
- OSAP: In 2017 Ontario tax credits/rebates became grants
- **\$11.6B** in financial aid, approximately 40% non-repayable
- **\$3.8B** in tax credits (90% federal)
- In 2023 more than 550,000 students took out **\$5.6B** in RESP
- Postsecondary institutions provide **\$3.2B** in scholarship/bursary

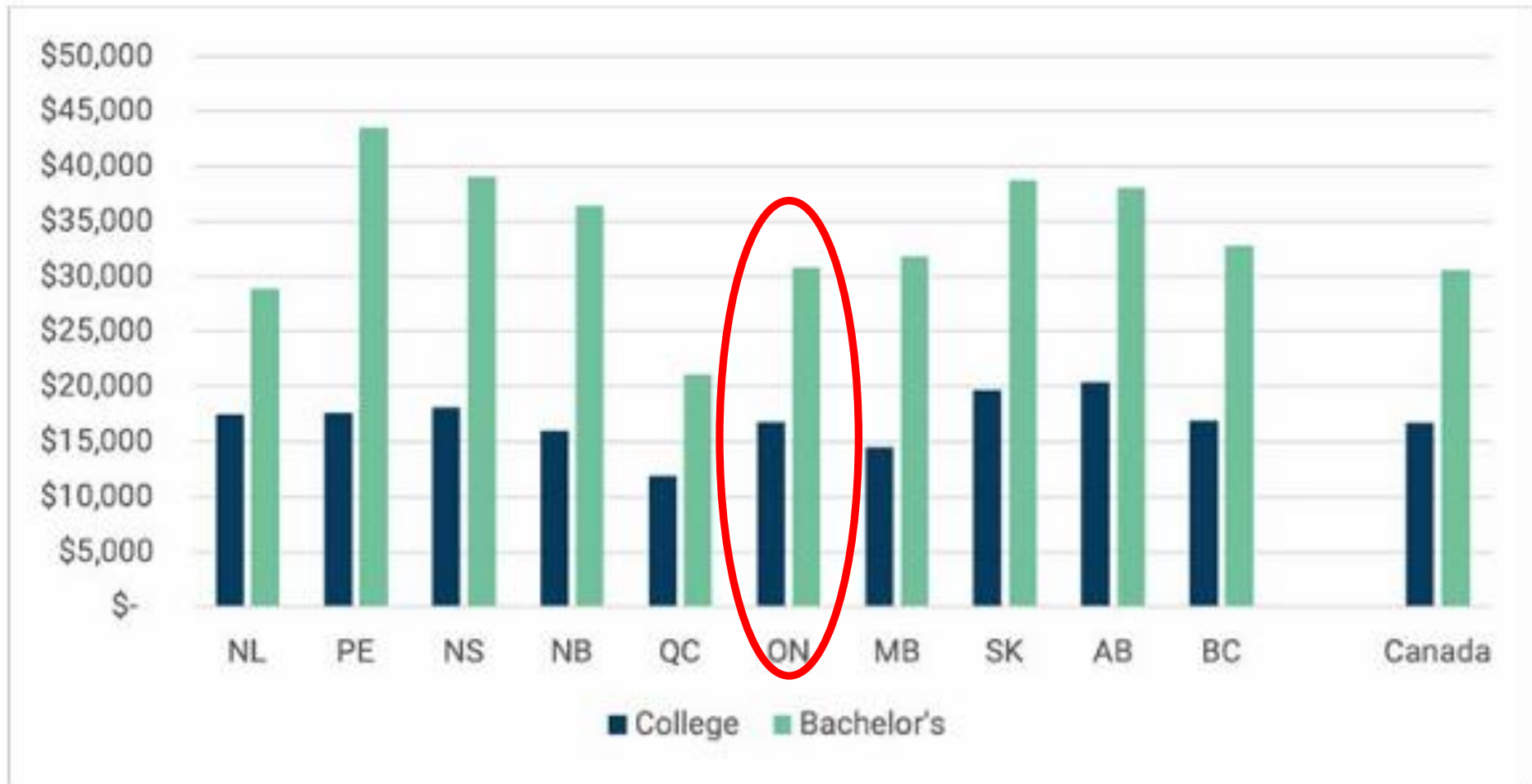
Fewer loans, more grants/bursaries

Figure 5.12: Total Student Financial Assistance by Type, Selected years, Canada, 1993-94 to 2023-2024, in Billions, in \$2023



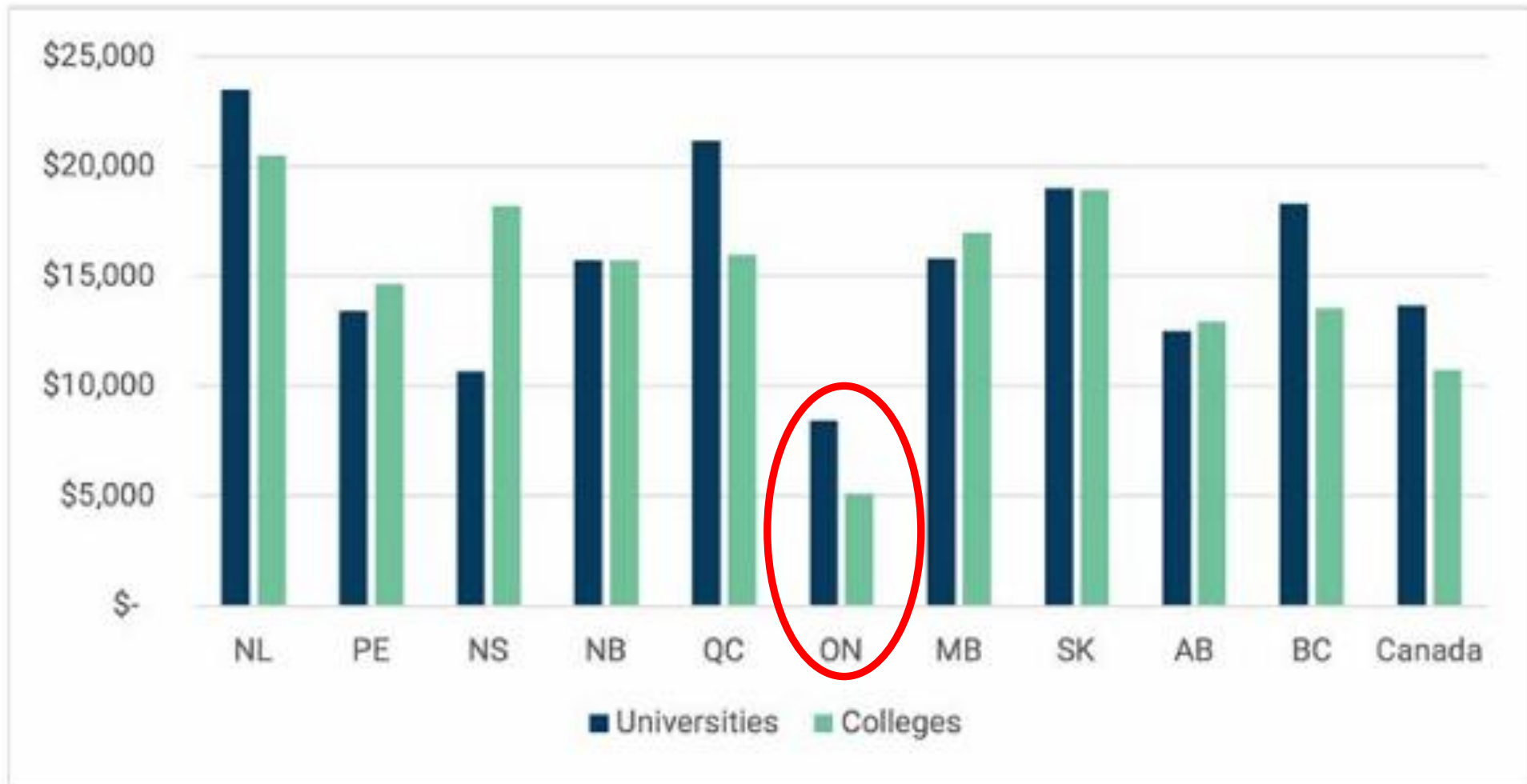
Average Student Debt has also fallen

Figure 5.15: Average Student Debt at Graduation, by Province, Universities and Colleges, 2020



Provincial Funding has declined

Figure 4.4: Provincial Expenditures per FTE Student by Sector, 2023-24



Funding shortfalls

- Provincial funding declining as overall ratio
- Enrolments increasing (especially universities)
- 10% Tuition reduction (2019) and subsequent freezes
- Student Choice Initiative (2019)
- COVID (2020)
- Federal decision to reduce international student visas (2024)

Ontario universities were first to show the strain

2021

In Laurentian's wake, post-secondary now barred from declaring insolvency

'Loophole' in federal legislation that allowed for Laurentian University's 2021-2022 insolvency restructuring has now been closed; union president calls the news 'a relief'



[Heidi Ulrichsen](#)
Jun 21, 2024 2:45 PM



The Parker Building at Laurentian University. | Heidi Ulrichsen/Sudbury.com

2023

Queen's principal says 'no risk' university will close, but fears remain

Kingston, Ont., school facing \$48M deficit despite hiring freeze, other cuts



[Dan Taekema](#) · CBC News · Posted: Jan 30, 2024 4:00 AM EST | Last Updated: January 30, 2024



Listen to this article ⓘ

Estimated 4 minutes

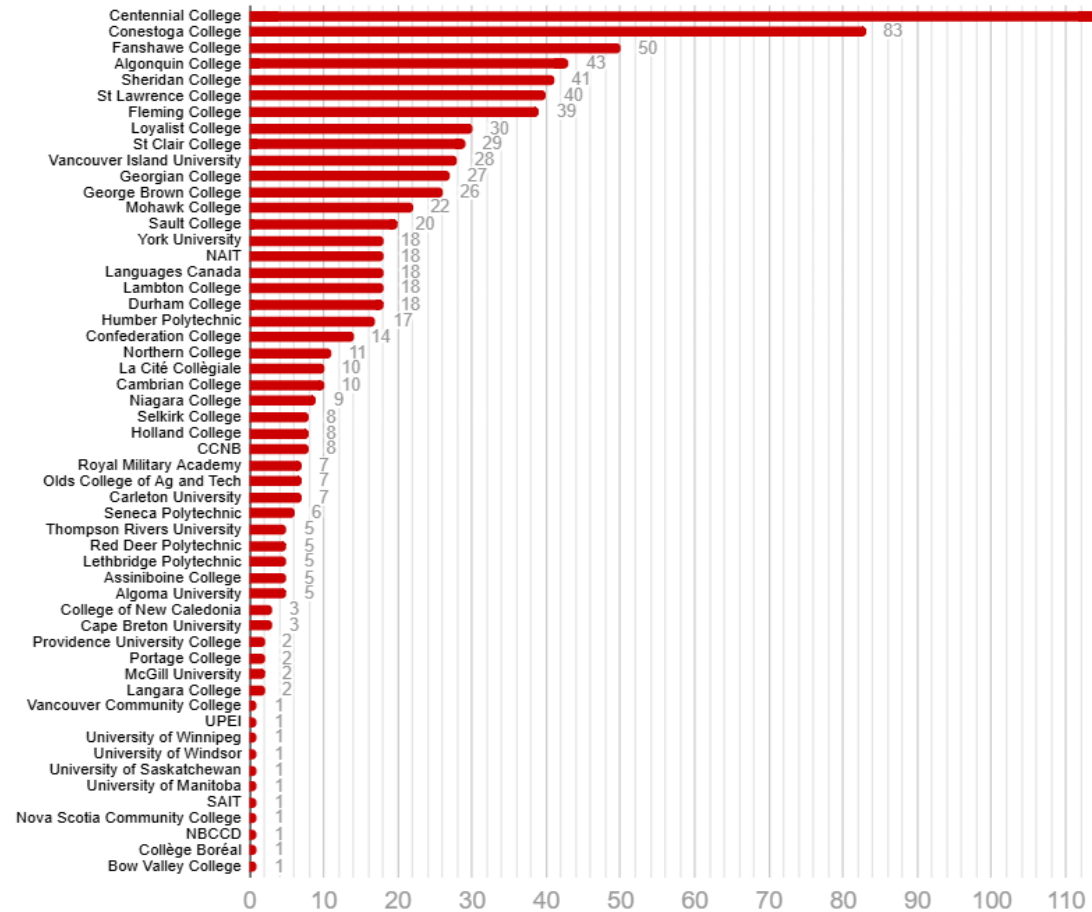


Queen's University is facing a \$48-million budget deficit, raising concerns about cuts and academic impacts. (Michelle Allan/CBC)

Now Ontario colleges are being hit

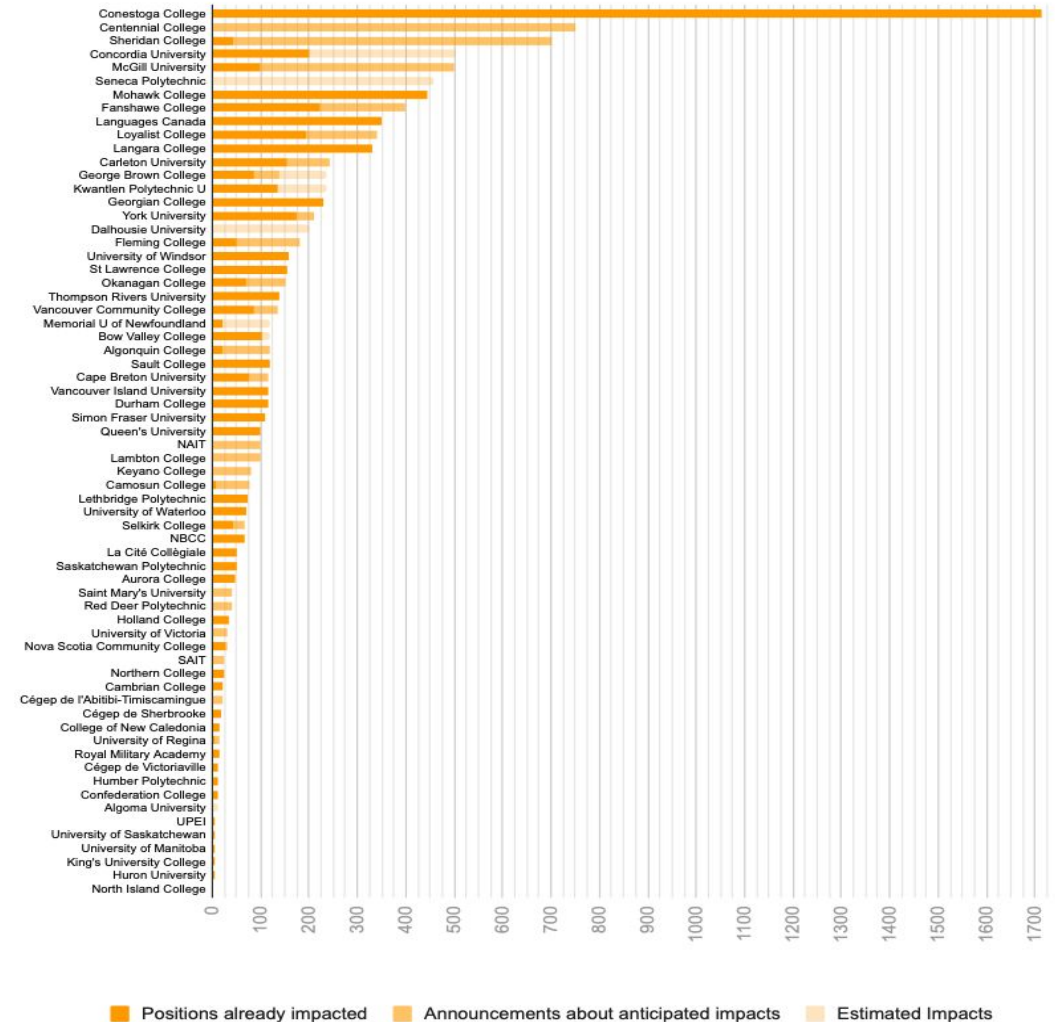
Programs Suspended in CdnPSE

Reported Suspensions/Closures of Programs (including ESL)



Jobs Impacted in CdnPSE

Reported Layoffs, Early Retirements, Positions Eliminated since Fall 2024




13 Ontario college campuses



3. Labour Market

Predicting the labour market

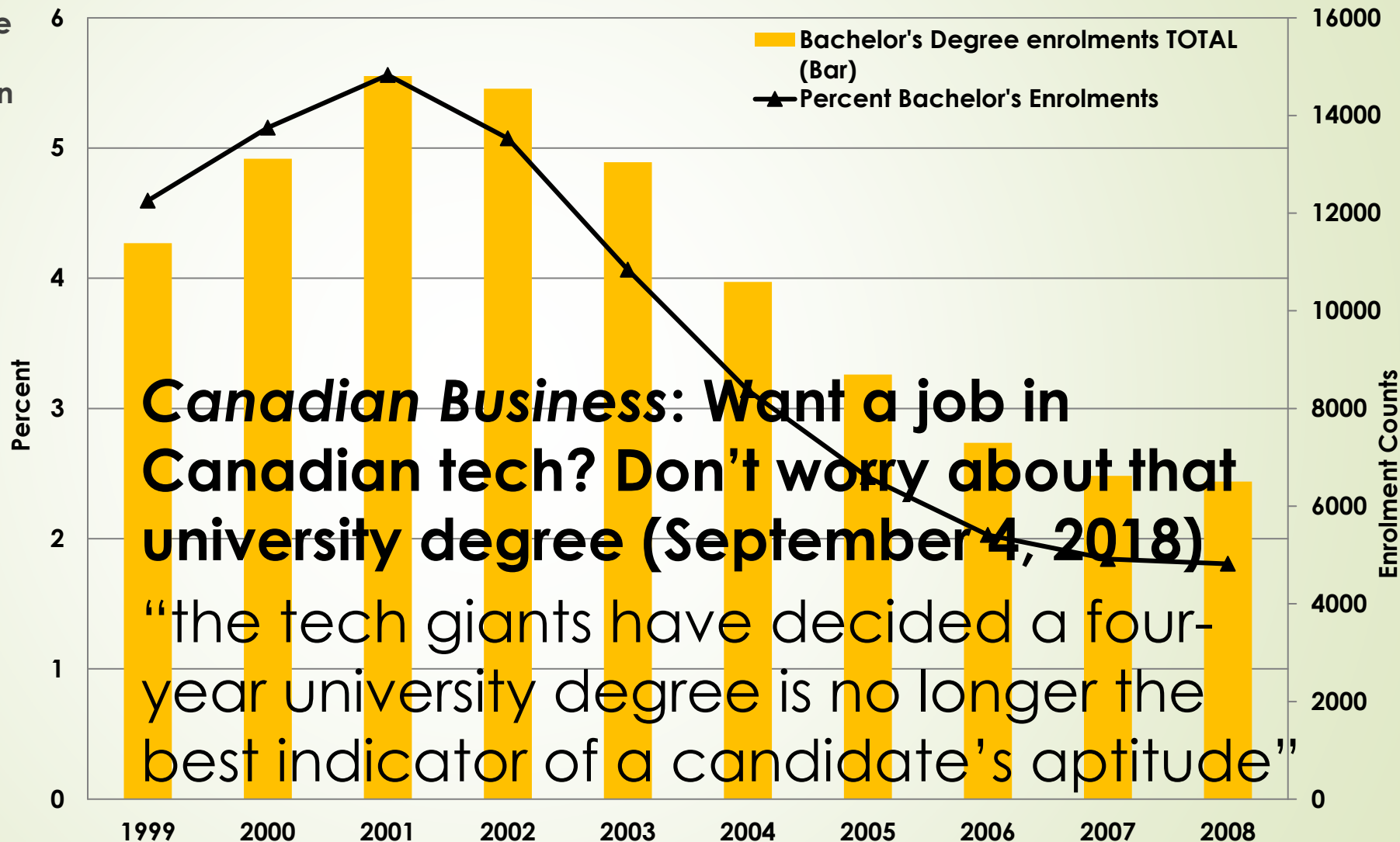
A photograph of Wayne Gretzky, captain of the Edmonton Oilers, in his blue and orange uniform, skating on ice. He is leaning forward, holding his hockey stick, and looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background is a light blue gradient.

"I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it has been."
-- Wayne Gretzky

RevREI.com

Beginning in 1999, Ontario poured \$70M annually into expanding computer science and electronic engineering enrolments, in response to the IT sector's warnings about critical worker shortages in an industry expanding exponentially. The dot.com bubble burst the following year.

Computer Science



Primary & Secondary Teachers

Ontario considering shortening length of teachers' program, documents suggest

School principals, elementary teachers union have voiced support for change



Allison Jones · The Canadian Press · Posted: Apr 30, 2025 8:25 AM EDT | Last Updated: April 30



Listen to this article ⓘ

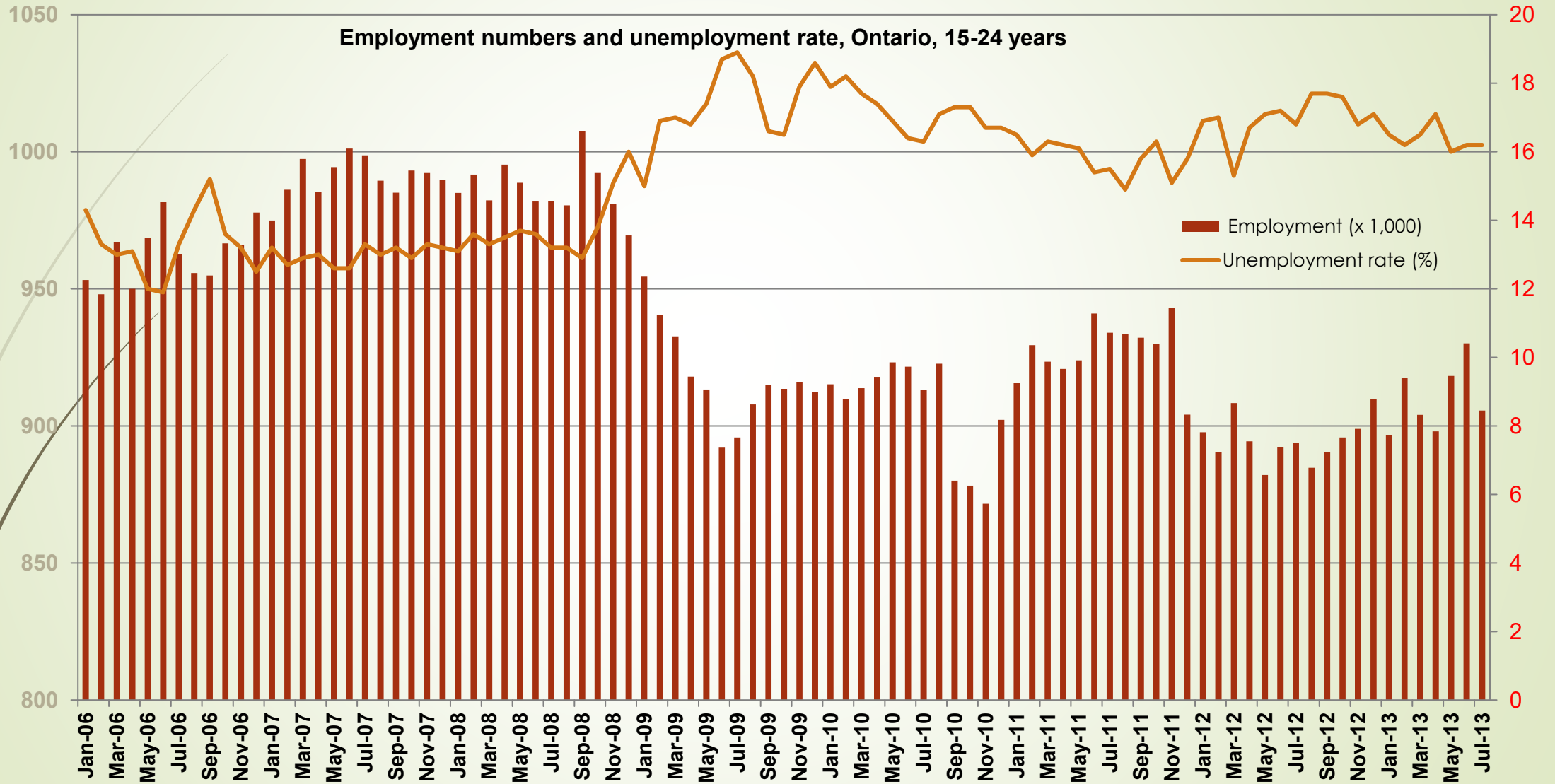
Estimated 6 minutes



Teachers who complete longer practicums feel better prepared and are more likely to stay in the profession, according to a document from the Ministry of Education obtained by The Canadian Press. (Chris Young/The Canadian Press)

“Highlighted in the summary of the document on teachers' college are findings that **longer programs do not make better teachers.**”

2008-09 Financial Crisis



Source: MTCU, data from Labour Force Survey.

Aftermath

CANADA'S NATIONAL MAGAZINE

JANUARY 21, 2013

GENERATION JOBLESS



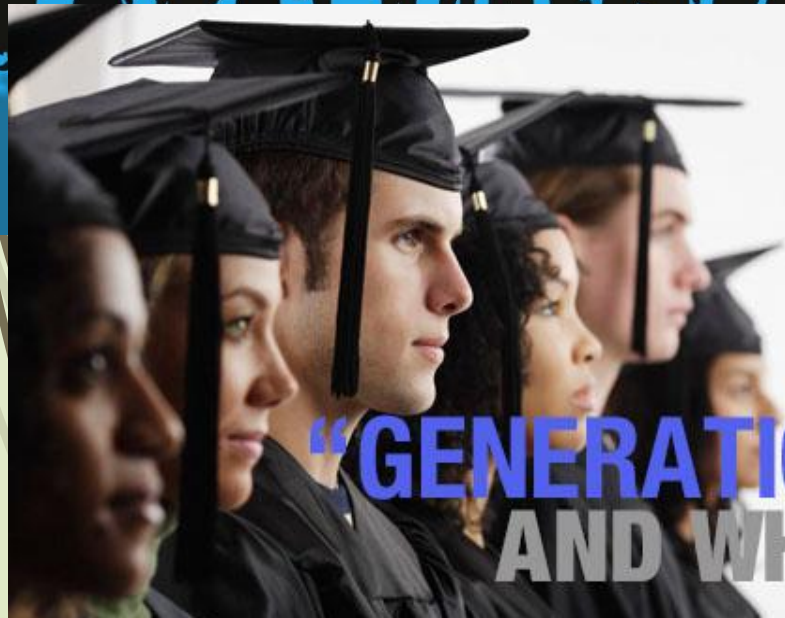
THE NEW UNDERCLASS

Why so many smart, educated, ambitious young people have no future P.38

THE ESSENTIAL PARENT'S GUIDE to help their college student beat the odds by having a job on graduation day. Includes over 50 proven strategies!

THE UNEMPLOYED GRAD

AND WHAT PARENTS CAN DO ABOUT IT



“GENERATION SCREWED”
AND WHO'S TO BLAME

2012 EDITION

DON PHILABAUM

Foreword by Ben Casnocha, co-author of *The Startup of YOU*

CAREER READINESS TEST **FREE** INCLUDED INSIDE THIS BOOK

Job Shortages

Huffington Post (March 13, 2018)

- “Canada’s labour shortage intensifies, with nearly 400,000 vacant jobs”

Global News (April 17, 2018)

- “Want a job that pays \$75K-\$100K? Few do, amid Canada’s worst labour shortage in 10 years.”

Career Beacon (August 20, 2018)

- “organizations are facing the lowest unemployment in 40 years.”

CNBC (August 13, 2018)

- “Why **ghosting** a potential employer is a huge no-no”

Canadian Business Magazine







- May Issue
- This is our definitive ranking of **Canada's Best Jobs**.
- Using our proprietary formula, we use publicly available data from Statistics Canada and Employment & Social Development Canada to rank the jobs with the highest salaries, strongest job growth, and best long-term hiring momentum.
- But this ranking does provide a useful snapshot of current job market opportunities: the fields that are **in need of fresh talent**, and are therefore likely to pay you well for your work.
- Start polishing that resumé...

Canada's Best Jobs: Top 20 (2015)

2017	Rank	Job Title	Median Salary	5-Year Wage Growth	5-Year Employment Growth	Job Demand Outlook
2	1	Mining & Forestry Manager	\$108,805	25%	37%	↗
	2	Oil & Gas Drilling Supervisor	\$79,040	23%	30%	↗
	3	Air Traffic Controller	\$87,360	26%	28%	↗
	4	Statistician & Actuaries	\$89,606	38%	48%	↘
	5	Engineering Manager	\$94,994	11%	15%	↗
1	6	Public Administration Director	\$99,195	21%	16%	→
	7	Power Systems Operator	\$84,198	20%	-5%	↗
	8	Health & Community Service Manager	\$100,006	37%	5%	↗
	9	Mapping Technologist	\$68,640	25%	20%	↗
	10	Senior Business Manager	\$97,136	11%	-16%	↗
	11	Health & Occupation Inspector	\$70,720	13%	26%	↗
	12	Software Engineer	\$85,342	17%	54%	↘
15	13	Specialized Engineer	\$79,997	14%	50%	↘
	14	Health Care Manager	\$90,626	13%	7%	↗
	15	Financial Administrator	\$83,990	18%	0%	↗
	16	Registered Nurse	\$74,672	12%	16%	↗
	17	Oil & Gas Well Operator	\$71,760	24%	45%	↘
	18	Industrial Technician	\$72,800	17%	19%	↗
	19	University Professor	\$85,717	15%	5%	↗
	20	Human Resources Manager	\$83,200	14%	12%	→

COVID-19

- Devastated travel and tourism sectors
- **“Front-line”**: Nurses, Truck Drivers, Personal Support Workers

Agilus	Canadim	CanadaWiz.Ca
<i>Top 10 in-demand jobs in Canada in 2022-23</i>	<i>Top In-Demand Jobs in Canada for 2022</i>	<i>Top 25 Most in Demand Jobs in Canada, 2022 & Beyond</i>
https://www.agilus.ca/blog/top-10-in-demand-jobs-in-canada-in-2022-23	https://www.canadim.com/blog/top-in-demand-jobs-in-canada/	https://canadawiz.ca/most-in-demand-jobs-in-canada/
Cybersecurity Professional	Key account manager	Web Developer 
Project Manager	Developer	Human Resources Managers
Web and Software Developer 	Marketing manager	Electrical Engineer
Administrative & Support Desk Spec.	Registered nurse	Veterinarians
Skilled Trades	Driver	Human Resources & Recruitment Off.
Data Scientists/Analysts	Customer service representative	Financial Advisor
Marketing/Digital Marketing Spec.	Welder 	Pharmacist
Logistics/Transport./Supply Chain	Engineer 	Welder 
HR/Talent/Development Leaders	Architect	General Labourer
Engineers 	Cloud architect	Aerospace Engineer

Other recent disruptions

- **Chat GPT** (2022) and Artificial Intelligence
- Administrative, customer service, data analysis and content creation
- In 2025 layoffs are hitting the technology sector itself
- **Donald Trump** (2025) and trade wars
- Automotive, steel and lumber sectors; electric vehicles
- **Federal government** with subsidized day care, international students, and proposed investments in housing and cuts to federal public sector



Concluding thoughts...

Explore your options



And learn how to adapt, because you will likely be changing jobs and careers at least several times...

Advice for high school students

- The hot jobs of today may not exist or need to be filled tomorrow
- Pursue the subjects that you have an interest in and passion for
- Find ways to gain experience outside of the classroom
- Discover who you are, what you are good at, what you like
- Remember that a PSE credential is not a voucher for a job
- If you need more time to think, take it; you're still young!!
- Always have a Plan B, a Plan C, a Plan D... and be open-minded.



Thank you!!

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